plant breeders or from providing for the rights of researchers to use protected seed for scientific investigation without authorisation from plant breeders.

A view has emerged in the country that a sui generies system of plant variety protection would be in our own interest to encourage greater investment in research and development of better varieties of seed.

The Government has accordingly started work on the drafting of suitable legislation which would also provide for farmers and researchers' privileges.

Export Trends

693. SHRI ASHOK MITRA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) the trend of exports during the first eight months of the current fiscal year as compared to the corresponding period in the precceding year;

(b) the commodity-wise breakdown, in volume as well as in value, of exports during the last two years; and

(c) the unit value of the principal items of exports for both the years?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) Exports during the first eight months (April-November) of the current year (1993-94) are estimated at US$ 13840 million (Rs. 43405) crores compared to US$ 11594 million (Rs. 33053 crores) during the corresponding period of the preceding year signifying a growth of 19.37% in US$ terms.

(b) Information called for is voluminous. These are available in Volume I of the Monthly Statistics of Foreign Trade of India (Annual Numbers for 1991-92 & 1992-93). March 1992 Issue, and March 1993 Issue, published by the DGCIS, Calcutta. These Publications are made available to the Lok Sabha Library.

(c) The unit values of principal items of exports for the years 1991-92 and 1992-93 are given in the statement.

Statement

Unit Values of Principal Export Commodities

(Value in Rupees)

S.No	Commodities	Unit of Qty.	1991-92	1992-93
1.	Jute manufactures including twist and yarn	Ton.	16507.5	16993.0
2.	Tea and Mate	Kg.	56.0	58.1
3.	Coffee and Coffee substitutes	Kg.	33.7	33.0
4.	Iron Ore	Ton.	486.7	498.1
5.	Mica (Incl. Splittings) and Mica waste	Kg.	*102*	8.8
6.	Tobacco manufactured	Kg.	40.7	67.1
7.	Spices	Ton.	27584.4	30566.8
8.	Cotton, Raw	Ton.	190291	28521.4
9.	Marine Products	Ton.	75943.1	82695.3
10.	Sugar and Mollasscs	Ton.	3528.2	7287.3
11.	Oil cake	Ton.	2527.1	4200.5
12.	Shellac	Ton.	45213.7	81959.5
13.	Cashew Kernels	Ton.	128794.0	119485.4
14.	Rice	Ten.	11139.5	16808.0
15.	Wheat	Ton.	2193.4	2778.3
16.	Coal	Ton.	1114.9	1310.8

Effect of GATT Agreement on Indian Gene Banks

694. SHRI S.S. SURJEWALA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) how and in what manner the Indian Gene Banks which have been created by ICAR and other Labs in the counrtry are going to be affected by the GATT Agreement;

(b) whether the Indian Genes which are superior and better in comparison to the genes of the other countries are going to be accepted under the GATT Agreement; and

(c) if so, what particular kind of genes, Government propose to press for acceptance by other countries signing the GATT Agreement?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) to (c) The Uruguay Round Agreement on TRIPS requires members countries to provide for patenting of all invertions

whether products or processes in all fields of technology including micro-organisms, provided they are new, involve an innovative step and are capable of industrial application. The Agreement does not address issues concerning gene banks. In a revised patent regime ICAR and other laboratories in the country would have the same opportunities for seeking intellectual property protection for their inventions as are generally available.

Opposition to Dunkel Draft

695. SHRI GOVINDRAO ADIK: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be ptesed to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that there is considerable opposition in the country on the signing of Dunkel Draft as it may surrender the economic sovereignty of the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof mentioning the merits and demerits of the Dunkel Draft; and

(c) what steps Government propose to take to save the economic sovereignty of the country after signing the Dunkel Draft?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) to (c) The Uruguay Round results will on the whole be advantageous to us in increasing our exports. There will be increased market access opportunities for Indian goods as a result of lowering of tariffs and the phase out of the multi-fibre arrangement. The services agreement would also provide export opportunities. The rules govering multilateral trade have been strengthened. Though we will be required to amend our patents regime there are safeguards against abuse of patent rights by the holder. Our development policies are not constrained. Question of surrendering economic sovereignty does not arise. In any International agreement Sovereign nations can agree to certain conditionalities for advancing their-mutual interest.

Growth of High Value Yielding Tobacco

696. SHRI MENTAY PADMA-NABHAM: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have received any proposal to encourage tobacco farmers to grow higher value yielding tobacco;

(b) what directions have been given to the Tobacco Board to encourage farmers to make such a conversion; and

(c) the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI KAMALUDDIN AHMED): (a) to (c) Government has not received any such proposal. However, Government has been all along trying through the Tobacco Board to encourage farmers to improve the quality and productivity of FCV tobacco.

Joint Ventures with Uzbekistan

@697. SHRI IQBAL SINGH: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state: .

(a) whether Government are considering a proposal for joint ventures and investment in Uzbekistan which had rich resources of coal, gas non ferrous metals and gold; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) and (b) Government are generally encouraging and facilitating joint ventures in Uzbekistan as a part of the trade promotion strategy for that country, eight Indian joint ventures in Uzbekistan were approved during the last couple of

@ Previously Unstarred Question No. 539. Transferred from 24.2.94.